

What is claimed is:

1. A system for operating with a store having a plurality of products, the system comprising:

a plurality of cash register stations, each cash register station including

an electromagnetic detector for generating first signals corresponding to product pricing and for generating second signals identifying products selected for purchase;

a first processing unit that executes a first program in a first memory to correlate second signals with first signals,

wherein the system also includes a plurality of second processing units, each second processing unit executing a second program in a second memory and receiving second signals from the electromagnetic detector, in a respective one of the cash register stations, to send a third signal to the first processing unit, wherein the first processing unit displays an amount due in accordance with the third signal.

2. The system of claim 1 wherein each second processing unit is in the respective one of the cash register stations.

3. The system of claim 1 further including

a central computer that communicates product pricing information with each of the first

processing units.

4. The system of claim 1 further including
a network including a common computer that communicates pricing information,
wherein the first processing unit, of each cash register station, is in the network, and
wherein the second processing unit, of each cash register station, receives the second signals
from a signal path that excludes the network.

5. The system of claim 1 further including
a switch that generates a signal indicating the end of a checkout transaction for a
customer, the switch being activatable by a clerk,
wherein the second processing unit is in a signal path between the switch and the first processing
unit.

6. The system of claim 1 further including
a signal path from the second processing unit to the first processing unit,
wherein the second processing unit sends a signal indicating a tender of a discount to the first
processing unit, via the signal path.

7. The system of claim 1 further including
a printer that generates a report of the checkout transaction for a customer,

wherein the second processing unit is in a signal path between the first processing unit and the printer.

8. The system of claim 1 further including
a switch that generates a signal indicating the end of a checkout transaction for a customer, the switch being activatable by a clerk,
wherein a signal path between the switch and the first processing unit excludes the second processing unit.

9. The system of claim 1 further including
a printer that generates a report of the checkout transaction for a customer,
wherein a signal path between the first processing unit and the printer and excludes the second processing unit.

10. The system of claim 1 further including
a signal path from the second processing unit to the first processing unit,
wherein the second processing unit sends a signal indicating a UPC coupon to the first processing unit, via the signal path.

11. A method for a system including a store having a plurality of products, and a plurality of cash register stations, the method comprising:

generating first signals corresponding to product pricing and for generating second signals identifying products selected for purchase;

executing a first program in a first memory to correlate second signals with first signals, wherein the method also includes executing a second program in a second memory and receiving second signals generated in a respective one of the cash register stations, to send a third signal to the first program, wherein the program displays an amount due responsive to the third signal.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein each step of executing a second program is performed in the respective one of the cash register stations.

13. The method of claim 11 further including communicating product pricing information with a central computer.

14. The method of claim 11 wherein the system further includes a network with a common computer, and the method further includes that communicating pricing information with the common computer; and receiving the second signals from a signal path that excludes the network.

15. The method of claim 11 further including activating a manual switch to generate a signal indicating the end of a checkout transaction for a customer; receiving the signal in the second program; and

subsequently sending the signal from the second program to the first program.

16. The method of claim 11 wherein the system further includes a signal path from the second processing unit to the first processing unit and the method further includes sending a signal indicating a tender of a discount to the first processing unit, via the signal path.

17. The method of claim 11 wherein the system further includes a display that generates information about the checkout transaction wherein the method further includes sending signals from the first program to the display, via the second program.

18. The method of claim 11 wherein the system further includes a signal path from the second processing unit to the first processing unit and the method further includes sending a signal indicating a UPC coupon to the first processing unit, via the signal path.

19. A system for operating with a plurality of portable cards each having a card memory, and a store having a plurality of products, the system comprising:

a plurality of cash register stations, each cash register station including

an electromagnetic detector for generating first signals corresponding to product pricing and for generating second signals identifying products selected for purchase;

a card interface for reading third signals corresponding to product pricing

from the card memory of one of the portable cards;

a first processing unit that executes a first program in a first memory to

correlate second signals with first signals,

wherein the system also includes a plurality of second processing units, each second processing unit executing a second program in a second memory, to correlate second signals from the electromagnetic detector, in a respective one of the cash register stations, the with third signals read by the card interface, in the respective one of the cash register stations.

20. The system of claim 19 wherein each second processing unit is in the respective one of the cash register stations.

21. The system of claim 19 further including

a central computer that communicates product pricing information with each of the first processing units.

22. The system of claim 19 further including

a network including a common computer that communicates pricing information, wherein the first processing unit, of each cash register station, is in the network, and wherein the second processing unit, of each cash register station, receives the second signals from a signal path that excludes the network.

23. The system of claim 19 further including
a switch that generates a signal indicating the end of a checkout transaction for a customer, the switch being activatable by a clerk,
wherein the second processing unit is in a signal path between the switch and the first processing unit.

24. The system of claim 19 further including
a signal path from the second processing unit to the first processing unit,
wherein the second processing unit sends a signal indicating a tender of a discount to the first processing unit, via the signal path.

25. The system of claim 19 further including
a printer that generates a report of the checkout transaction for a customer,
wherein the second processing unit is in a signal path between the first processing unit and the printer.

26. The system of claim 19 further including
a switch that generates a signal indicating the end of a checkout transaction for a customer, the switch being activatable by a clerk,
wherein a signal path between the switch and the first processing unit excludes the second processing unit.

27. The system of claim 19 further including
a printer that generates a report of the checkout transaction for a customer,
wherein a signal path between the first processing unit and the printer and excludes the second
processing unit.

28. The system of claim 19 further including
a signal path from the second processing unit to the first processing unit,
wherein the second processing unit sends a signal indicating a UPC coupon to the first
processing unit, via the signal path.

29. A system for operating with a plurality of portable cards each having a card memory
for storing product discount information , and a store with a plurality of products, the system
comprising:

a plurality of cash register stations, each cash register station including

an electromagnetic detector for generating first signals corresponding to
product pricing and for generating second signals identifying products selected for
purchase;

a card interface for reading from the card memory of one of the portable of
cards;

a first processing unit that executes a first program in a first memory to

correlate second signals with first signals,

a third signal-path between a peripheral device and the first processing unit,

a second processing unit, responsive to a signal on the third signal path, that executes a second program in a second memory, to correlate second signals with third signals from the card memory of one of the plurality of card, wherein the first processing unit determines a total amount due by receiving a fourth signal from the second processing unit.

30. The system of claim 29 wherein the fourth signal corresponds to a discount tender.

31. The system of claim 29 wherein the peripheral device is an input device.

32. The system of claim 29 wherein the third signal-path carries product identification information.

33. The system of claim 29 wherein the peripheral device is the electromagnetic detector.

34. The system of claim 29 further including a medium for a first computer network, wherein a first network-interface, in each cash register station, is an interface to the first computer network.

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35. A method for a system including a plurality of portable cards each having a card memory, and a store having a plurality of products, and a plurality of cash register stations, the method comprising:

generating first signals corresponding to product pricing and for generating second signals identifying products selected for purchase;

reading third signals corresponding to product pricing from the card memory of one of the portable cards;

executing a first program in a first memory to correlate second signals with first signals, wherein the method also includes executing a second program in a second memory, to correlate second signals generated in a respective one of the cash register stations, the with third signals read in the respective one of the cash register stations.

36. The method of claim 35 wherein each step of executing a second program is performed in the respective one of the cash register stations.

37. The method of claim 35 further including communicating product pricing information with a central computer.

38. The method of claim 35 wherein the system further includes a network with a common computer, and the method further includes that communicating pricing information

with the common computer; and

receiving the second signals from a signal path that excludes the network.

39. The method of claim 35 further including

activating a manual switch to generate a signal indicating the end of a checkout transaction for a customer; receiving the signal in the second program; and subsequently sending the signal from the second program to the first program.

40. The method of claim 35 wherein the system further includes a signal path from the second processing unit to the first processing unit and the method further includes sending a signal indicating a tender of a discount to the first processing unit, via the signal path.

~~41. The method of claim 35 wherein the system further includes a display that generates information about the checkout transaction wherein the method further includes sending signals from the first program to the display, via the second program.~~

42. The method of claim 35 wherein the system further includes a signal path from the second processing unit to the first processing unit and the method further includes sending a signal indicating a UPC coupon to the first processing unit, via the signal path.

~~Sub A³ 43. A method for a system including a plurality of portable cards each having a card~~

memory for storing product discount information , and a store with a plurality of products, the method comprising:

generating first signals corresponding to product pricing;
generating second signals identifying products selected for purchase;
reading from the card memory of one of the portable of cards;
executing a first program in a first memory to correlate second signals with first signals,
sending a device signal on a third signal-path between a peripheral device and the first program,

executing, responsive to the device signal, a second program in a second memory, to correlate second signals with third signals from the card memory of one of the plurality of card, wherein the step of executing a first program determines a total amount due by receiving a fourth signal from the step of executing a second program.

44. The method of claim 43 wherein receiving the fourth signal includes receiving a discount tender.

45. The method of claim 43 wherein sending a device signal includes sending the device signal from the peripheral device to the first program.

46. The method of claim 43 wherein sending the device signal includes sending product identification information.